VICTORIAN WOMEN IN LIFE AND IN FICTION

BY
LOUISE E. RORABACHER
A.B., University of Michigan, 1931
A.M., Northwestern University, 1937

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN
ENGLISH IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE
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The reader of the social history of England finds its pages besprinkled with references to the English novel. Sometimes characters and situations are mentioned merely to illustrate points deduced from other evidence, often they are used to corroborate , and occasionally they even appear as sole testimony for a contemporary custom. Historians of the Victorian period, when the novel flourished exceedingly, are particularly prone to use such testimony. But they leave unraised the important issue of whether or not the novel is a reliable source of information.

To begin to make an answer to that question was the larger purpose of this study, which, to complete, would require prolonged investigations into every aspect of Victorian society. I limited myself to an attempt to discover whether the Victorian novel faithfully presented, through its women characters, the actual position of Victorian women as ascertainable through unimpeachable sources such as contemporary legislation, letters, and memoirs. Léonie Villard, in *la Femme anglaise au XIXe siècle et son évolution d'après le roman anglais contemporain* (1920), acclaims the novel as the best source of information concerning nineteenth century women, considering it to contain valuable testimony drawn straight from contemporary manners; C. Willett Cunnington, in his *Feminine Attitudes in the Nineteenth Cenaury* (1935), summarily dismisses it as an untrustworthy source of evidence, believing that Victorian woman successfully concealed her real self from the novelist. Such disagreement among students of the same period calls for investigation; opinion need not rule in matters susceptible of demonstration.

Studies of the Victorian period are legion, but these too often regard life and letters as separate phases of human activity, the historian concerning himself solely with actual fact, and the literary scholar with life as it is reflected in

letters, neither making use of the other's conclusions. There is need for more studies of the interdependndnce of literature and life, such as Mary Sumner Benson's *Women in Eighteenth Century America* (1935), in which the treatment of women in fiction, drama, and the periodical is compared with the position accorded them by theory and fact. No such attempt has been made for Victorian England. Studies of the actual position of women are numerous, as are those dealing with women in literature; but there is none devoted to a comparison of fact with fiction, such as might yield some notion of the accuracy of the latter.

My purpose, then, was not a purely literary one, but one which puts literature to what I consider a valid test — the determination of how accurately it reflects, in spirit and in fact, the life which produced it. Such an examination might be made for any literary genre. I chose the novel because, since it appears most conspicuously to attempt to reflect reality in detail, it is the form to which the social historian most frequently refers. It might be made, too, for other periods; I chose the Victorian because the novel was then enjoying its greatest popularity and is most frequently drawn on by the later student of manners, and because the position of women then experienced its most rapid changes, thus producing the most favorable conditions for such a test as I proposed. I limited myself roughly to the half century between 1840 and 1890 because it was an important era in feminism: when it opened, the status of women had remained practically unchanged for centuries; when it closed, women had won a degree of emancipation unknown in the entire previous history of western Europe. It stops short, however, of the militant suffragism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which, being a narrow but intense manifestation of the broader feminist movement preceding, is deserving of separate study.

My method was to read widely in the novel of domestic and social life, such as purported, at least, to reflect contemporary manners with some degree of realism. For the sake of a variety of viewpoints, I chose to read a scattering

of novels from a large number of authors, rather than the entire works of a few. I made no effort to limit myself to the masterpieces of the century, for works now little known were often more popular in their own day, and more truly representative of the thought of the people. Neither did I attempt to choose novels dealing with a particular social class; that most of these used deal with women of the middle and upper classes indicates the novel's preoccupation with leisured women, the class which was also most greatly affected by the feminist movement. That more women writers than men appear among those chosen reveals the tendency among women novelists to produce the type of fiction used in this study; the proportion of feminists and anti-feminists seems to have been much the same in both sexes.

Since my primary interest was not merely to discover how women were portrayed in the novel, but to determine the validity of that portrayal as a reflection of Victorian life, my method was to place the evidence provided by fiction against that discoverable from less controversial sources of social history. To this end I read widely not only in the novel, but in such primary materials as were available to me — letters, memoirs, contemporaneous records of legislation and studies of social conditions, and articles of fact and opinion from leading periodicals; and in secondary materials such as histories of the Victorian period in general and of the feminist movement in particular. From these emerged the facts with which I compared the testimony of the novel in attempting to determine in what ways and to what extent it is in itself a trustworthy source for the social historian. Since the period studied was of such length as to present, in the novel as in life, no static portrait, but a kaleidoscopic view of evershifting attitudes, my general approach was chronological, in an effort to make clear the change, or absence of change, appearing during the half century examined. To bring about order among the multifarious aspects of woman's existence, I arranged the materials according to the various phases of her activity. These fell roughly into two parts: the first, the accepted spheres of home and society,

to which custom had long assigned her; the second, the disputed spheres of ideas and affairs, into which conservative forces were attempting to keep the rising tide of feminism from sweeping her.

Before turning to the specific characterizations of women in these spheres, however, I examined the general concept of the female sex as revealed in the novel through the figure of speech, the cliché, the casual reference to womankind, believing that through these matters of diction, preconceptions so native to the novelist as to be held perhaps unconsciously might be discovered. Numerous quotations from the novels used indicate that in the Victorian mind there existed certain widely accepted assumptions concerning woman, based on her observable physical inferiority to man. Since she was deficient in muscle and delicate in appearance, she was regarded as possessing the attributes natural to her weakness: resignation, patience, timidity, tact, gentleness, tenderness, consideration, and unselfishness. These qualities were looked upon as so essentially feminine that woman was metaphorically invoked in descriptions of their rare presence in man.

By deduction she was assumed, as other quotations demonstrate, to be man's mental inferior as well. In place of the power of reason which was his, she possessed intuition. She was emotionally unstable, being given to tears and acts of impulsiveness, but she had an extraordinarily great capacity for love. She was also morally inferior, being incapable of friendship because she lacked such qualities as justice and honor, and was preoccupied with trivialities and gossip. Dependent on man, she acknowledged him to be her superior, and was content with the influence which she was able to exert over him.

The conventionalized clichés through which these feminine qualities are revealed continued in use throughout the period, placing a constant emphasis on sex differences, real or imagined, in the novel, at a time when the feminists were attempting to reduce such distinctions, in life. They yield a fairly consistent picture of the general Victorian concept of

woman. Such novelists as Trollope and Mrs. Craik, definite "woman's spherists," furnish the main outlines of the portrait, which is filled in by numerous other authors. Only writiers like the discerning Meredith and feminist Sarah Grand appear greatly out of line.

The "woman question," which was an attempt to define the proper sphere for feminine activity, was being seriously raised for the first time in the nineteenth century, the earlier pleas of Mary Wollstonecraft and others having been little heeded. Economic pressure created by the Industrial Revolution was one of the principal forces requiring an enlargement of women's customary sphere of activity, but the change was not made without a struggle. Tradition still proclaimed, "Woman's place is in the home." The home to which women were thus assigned is pictured innumerable times by the Victorian novelists, who, inclining more frequently to the school of Austen than of Scott, produced domestic and society novels in shoals. Much is said of the family relationships of women. As wives, they were at the mercy of their husbands, who dominated them physically, mentally, and morally, but who in turn were responsible for them to the world. As mothers, they bore many children and lost many, finding in motherhood and the training of their young a great formative experience, although they were not considered intellectually capable of moulding sons past infancy. As daughters, they were frequently pictured as antagonistic to their mothers, but were rewarded by a closer relationship with their fathers than sons often enjoyed. They were similarly closer to their brothers than to their sisters, sacrificing for them in youth and in turn depending on them for support once the family home was broken up. The lot of the women whom dependency forced to live under another's roof made that of wife or daughter or sister appear pleasant by contrast.

The occupations available to women in the home to which tradition confined them were few and trifilng. As a result of the Industrial Revolution, the work which had occupied the women of an earlier age was done increasingly outside the home, and in the homes of the middle and upper classes, with

which the novel is primarily concerned, there were usually servants available to attend to whatever tasks remained. Women turned to light literature to pass the time — chiefly to the novel, which was read much by Victorian heroines, although, curiously enough, the practice was usually condemned by their authors. An even more frequent occupation was needlecraft, which occasionally involved sewing and mending but usually only "fancy-work" of all sorts. The novel presents a steady procession of laides crocheting, knitting, tatting, and embroidering; surrounded by Berlin wool, canvas, tapestry frames, and work boxes; turning out purses and pincushions, collars and mittens, lavishly decorated slippers, braces, and waistcoats for their menfolk, and rugs and screens for their drawing-rooms. That women's time might be more usefully employed was seldom suggested until the close of the period; it was sufficient that she was somehow occupied.

Society was accepted by even the most conservative, however, as a legitimate extension of the home sphere. Women entered it with two objects, amusement and matrimony. As little girls they were trained in accomplishments; at the age of seventeen or eighteen, they made formal debuts. Their social recreations were limited by custom and clothing: indoors, they enjoyed visiting, playing card games, and dancing; outdoors, they walked, rode (on sidesaddles), played croquet and, toward the end of the period, the more strenuous game of tennis. Early Victorian heroines prided themselves on their delicate health, which made for frequent fainting spells and endangered their lives when they were crossed in love. But to die of love had rather gone out of fashion; in Victorian fiction, to occupy oneself with good works and eventually be reunited with one's lover was a more frequent and agreeable fate. Later in the century a more wholesome attitude appears, and good health was increasingly portrayed as a virtue.

The conduct of the women in the novel was governed by strict rules of decorum, great formality being observed in both speech and action. Women did not swear, nor use to-

bacco, nor drink much; they were even protected from such indulgences on the part of the men. Although ignorant of evil, women were expected to work together for good, theirs being the sex whose task it was to preserve the proprieties. Unmarried girls were guarded by a very strict chaperonage system, but the double standard, making liberties possible to men, was accepted by both sexes. Women, incapable of friendship, were preoccupied with the subject of love, which was the chief theme of the novels. Illicit love was a problem by which the earlier Victorian novelists were fascinated, but the appearance of which they were careful to explain away as a misapprehension, setting up standards of prudery which were attacked by more liberal novelists later in the period. Women were regarded as the sex to whom love was everything, yet they must never feel the emotion until they had received an eligible proposal of marriage. The hunt for husbands, in which young ladies were aided by match-making mammas, was carried on relentlessly. Marriage being women's only possible career, they looked to it not only for love but for money, social position, and escape from the ignominy of old-maidhood.

A comparison of fiction with fact indicates that the novel is generally trustworthy as an index to the conservative spheres of home and society, life supplying counterparts to the kind of existence led by women in the novel. Such discrepancies as exist are generally the result of limitations in the scope of the novel, which not only confined itself largely to gentlewomen, but also was often content with stock characters and situations which, themselves true to life, yet give only a restricted picture of the whole; others arise from the various purposes of the novelists, who had many concerns besides realism.

Discrepancies increase, however, in the disputed spheres of women's activity, where the novel tended to hang back, conservatively, while the feminist movement in its various phases was making great changes in women's position. The first step toward freedom was intellectual. Here the sex had to fight the traditional notion of woman's mental in-

feriority, which was firmly imbedded in the popular consciousness. At the beginning of the period a prominent physiologist, Alexander Walker, in his studies called *Beauty* (1836), *Intermarriage* (1838), and *Woman* (1840), even claimed to give it scientific certitude. Walker, in measuring the heads of twin children of different sexes, had discovered the heads of the girls to be relatively smaller than those of the boys. From this he deduced an inferiority of intellect in the female. Further, finding the foreheads of females proportionately larger, he concluded, by a system of faculty psychology, that women lacked the powers of reason and will possessed by men, but had as compensations stronger instinct and intuition. His work gave the appearance of certainty to the popular concept of sex differences, against which those who wished to work a reform in the education of women had to fight.

"Blue-stocking" had become a term of reproach; the novel generally frowned upon women with intellectual pretensions, and attempted to curb them with ridicule. Only in Disraeli appear heroines whose keen minds aroused in their circle no sense of strangeness. Other novelists, like Trollope, were content to attribute to their commendable women the quality of common sense, which was regarded as more womanly than intellect. The popular view of women's inferior mentality no doubt influenced Victorian education, which was conducted for boys and girls strictly in accordance with the theory of separate spheres of activity for the two sexes. The Report of the Schools Inquiry Commission in the sixties led to a great change, however; public schools in which girls received the same training as boys were established, and colleges and universities were gradually opened to women. But the novel was slow to reflect these educational reforms, continuing to present heroines who were not educated, in the new sense, but accomplished, in the old; whose training consisted only of music and drawing, French and propriety. There appears some criticism of the superficiality of such education, but only ridicule (the easiest attitude to take toward change) of the reforms. Fiction was generally content, even in the late

Victorian period, to parrot the manners of the earlier age, and failed to reflect adequately the new movements.

The feminist movement of the nineteenth century, in its many phases, constituted a major social revolution. Once women had, through education, glimpsed the sphere of ideas, they became eager to enter the sphere of affairs. The question of "women's rights" gained many supporters among men and women alike, but the novel, save for a few writers late in the period, generally ridiculed the problem, conservatively insisting that women be content with the power they exercised through their influence on men. The movement gained strength in life, however. Philanthropy, which offered an undisputed opportunity for ladies suffering from ennui to expend their pent-up energy, was the field through which women first received the training in public service which was necessary to their later activities. Long before the Victorian era, ladies had been charitable; but now their activities expanded from mere personal almsgiving to large organized philanthropic efforts. Women like Elizabeth Fry, Mary Carpenter, Agnes Jones, and Louisa Twining were important not so much for what they personally accomplished as for the great movements which their work set in motion. The organization of large-scale undertakings was the keynote of the change occurring in the public activity of women during the Victorian period. But the novel, while frequently presenting philanthropy as an extension of woman's sphere, acceptable because it had the encouragement of religion, continued to feature the older almsgiving variety, its heroines visiting the sick, teaching the poor, and dispensing food and clothing with their own hands. Until the end of the period, it recognized the great philanthropic organizations only to ridicule them.

Another important field of public service entered by Victorian women was politics. Again the spirit of large-scale organization distinguished this activity from the political influence exercised by women in earlier times, when feminine interest had limited itself to aiding individual candidates through canvassing and entertaining. Now they became in-

terested in movements rather than men. Discontented with the slowness of effecting reform through indirect influence alone, they began, from the middle of the century on, to demand the vote. Although complete suffrage was not won until the twentieth century, women had by the seventies gained a limited suffrage and the right to hold certain offices; through organization, they shortly came to represent a considerable political force. The novel, however, seldom discussed women and politics together; when it did, it usually commended womanly apathy toward public issues, or described the type of individual influence characteristic of the women of an earlier age. Women who aspired to political power were ridiculed. Only a few serious novelists, late in the period, began to reflect the changing times.

The lack of occupation for middle-class women in the home sphere was responsible for the entrance of many women into the sphere of affairs; others were forced into it, often unwillingly, by economic necessity. Marriage was regarded as the only career for women, yet the population of England contained an excess of females which increased proportionately throughout the period, making marriage impossible for many. The only significant employment open to gentlewomen was teaching, which usually meant going out as a governess and being treated as little better than a servant. The novel was so fond of portraying the trials of such ladies that the "abused governess" became a tiresome stock character; but it failed of reality by too often making these actually superfluous women the objects of romantic love and prosperous marriage. Most women forced to teach preferred the greater independence of a position in a school, but the novel was much less sympathetic toward the teacher, whose existence in the confines of the schoolroom offered neither the abuse nor the romance which was the lot of the governess in fiction.

A vital phase of the feminist movement was the opening of new economic opportunities for women; the Victorian period produced many suggestions, practical and impractical. Among these was emigration to the colonies, a project which became a large organized effort through the work

of Maria Rye and Caroline Chisholm. Since the emigration of men was one of the causes for England's oversupply of women, it seemed logical to reduce that excess by sending women to join them. Actually, however, it was working women who were in demand among the colonists, both as wives and servants, and suffering ladies who had been reared to leisure found little relief through such schemes. More was accomplished for them by the gradual breaking down of class barriers, making it possible for them to go into commercial work from which social standing had long barred even gentlemen. The rapid expanse of Victorian commerce, with the opening of such new fields as telegraphy and typewriting, became the greatest solution to the economic problem of the dependent gentlewoman. The novel, however, showed little interest in these opportunities, clinging to the conservative notions that woman's place was in the home, whether there was a home for her or not, and that her mind was incapable of understanding the intricacies of business.

Superior women looked to the professions for an outlet for their energies as well as for a source of income. Those with particular talents had long been succeeding in the arts —in literature, on the stage, and, during the Victorian period, in music and painting. But women below the level of genius, beginning to look to other worthy fields, found them chiefly in nursing and medicine. The former was an occupation which, in the home, had long been regarded as women's peculiar province; outside, however, it suffered from the reputation of the Sarah Gamp type of paid nurse. To become an attractive field for gentlewomen, it had to be made a reputable profession. This was accomplished through the work of Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War; on the wave of her popularity, there were established numerous institutions for nurses' training through which many women found usefulness and independence. Yet in the novel there appear but few indications of this new profession for women; rather, we find persistent the pre-Nightingale notion that every woman was a capable nurse by virtue of her sex.

Medicine was a field which had belonged of old to women, but which, in becoming an exact science, had been lost to them, men replacing them even as midwives from the early nineteenth century on. England's first qualified woman physician began to practice in 1849, but jealousy shortly operated to close to women a profession which was not to be reopened to them for a quarter of a century. In the dozen years then remaining of our period, a few novelists attempted to treat of women in medicine, but most of them failed of any realistic consideration of the problems involved, being content merely to build the conventional love story against a new background. Throughout the period studied, the novel was generally content with the increasingly inadequate and monotonous menu of the home and social spheres, and, ignoring the many new and useful feminine types produced by the feminist movement, continued to confine itself to "womanly" women.

From the foregoing it appears that the concept of the inferiority of the female sex was so widely diffused throughout the general Victorian consciousness as to influence profoundly life and literature alike. It was no new nineteenth century idea, but one firmly grounded in the tradition of past ages, and upheld by all the forces of conservatism. Consequently, insofar as reality and fiction both drew upon this common fund of custom, they differ but slightly. If Victorian woman concealed her real self from the novelist, as Cunnington insists, the conventional externals of her life were nonetheless freely presented. The treatment of the accepted and thus relatively stable spheres of home and society in the novel is satisfactorily accurate.

But the feminist movement was, in the nineteeth century, a new and unprecedented force, breaking the conventional patterns for feminine behavior and thrusting women into fields hitherto occupied by men alone — into public service and employment, and all the joys and sorrows pertaining thereto. The change, as the briefest history of feminism indicates, was not made without a struggle; the path to emancipation was at every point hotly contested. But much of

it was won, and 1890 saw women possessing liberties of which 1840 had scarcely dreamed. The comparison of the testimony of the novel with the actual progress of feminism made in this study indicates that during these changes fact forged ahead of fiction, and that Miss Villard's confidence in the novel as a trustworthy witness to the evolution of women is somewhat misplaced. For the novel, a satisfactory chronicler of the status quo, failed to keep abreast of even so slow an advance as that of social reform. This circumstance the student in later times views with regret; wishing the novel to be in all respects an accurate record of its age, he is disappointed by the superficiality of its realism, and is tempted to criticize the novelist for having failed to fix the various stages of social progress in the unchanging pages of his art. Before such critics, the novelist deserves a hearing.

Various extenuating circumstances appear. It should be first of all recorded that the sins of the novel are of omission rather than commission — that it is accurate enough in what it includes, even though its vision is both narrow and myopic. Its failure to record social changes is a negative fault, while its success in recording, within its limitations, the minutiae of the scene directly before it is a positive virtue. It accomplishes all that it purposes, but is content with recording the past, and the conservative aspects of the present, leaving to other literary forms the more evangelistic intent of heralding the future.

Such limitations as we find in the novel arise largely from the inherent ephemerality peculiar to an art form which was, in the Victorian period at least, concerned with the specific and the transient more often than with the universal and the abiding. The representative Victorian novel was not for all ages, but for a day. Its writer would have been the last, perhaps, to expect or wish otherwise; for its authorship was less often a yielding to the impulse of the creative artist, aching to immortalize his thought, than a gainful employ to which certain hours in the day were devoted to writing chapters enough to meet a publisher's deadline. If the result won an immediate serial success, or better,

a large order from Mudie's, the writer was content. To produce a document faithfully recording the spirit of his age for the benefit of later scholars was scarcely a part of his scheme.

This satisfaction with immediate success is reflected in the lack of earnestness with which the novelist usually approached his task. His public demanded entertainment, not edification. "We asked no social questions — we pumped no hidden shame," Kipling explains in his delightful verses commemorating the "three-decker" novel. There were exceptions, of course — the "problem novel" appeared at this time in increasing numbers, as evidence of the general seriousness of the Victorian outlook. But, wrapped in its own problem (which was rarely the woman question, until the end of our period), it made no more effort than did the light-hearted three-decker to see life at once clearly and whole.

Not all novelists, it is true, were "representative." There were writers who valued their literary integrity above receipts, and who saw the universal through the maze of trivia. Such discerning novelists as Gaskell and Eliot, Meredith and Hardy, not only reflected the rising flood of feminism, but by giving it significant interpretation, doubtless helped to direct its waters in washing away the barriers of Victorian conservatism. Such writers were few, however, and their works were far outnumbered by those of the Riddells and the Craiks and the Braddons, who wrote with an eye on the market. The run-of-the-mill novel must actually have exercised a retarding influence on social change; for the hard-pressed factory girl, needle-woman, or governess, snatching a few moments of escape from the tedium of her work, turned naturally to those novels in which the heroine, after the proper number of obstacles had been overcome, married the hero and lived happily and free from toil, rather than to those (of which few enough existed) which attempted to record the rigors of her own superfluous existence. And whether or not Victorian fiction faithfully presented contemporary female character, we may be certain that contemporary fe-

male character did its best to ape Victorian fiction.

In drawing these conclusions I considered the representative Victorian novel, a book which does not exist save as a concept built of the qualities most often held in common by the great and small, the silly and sublime. Actually, as one reviews the individual novels in detail, one discovers many degrees of unreliability, such as emerge naturally from the background of the authors' varying abilities and intents. But one's conclusion, drawn from the general or the particular, is much the same — that the novelist, good or bad, is, by the nature of his profession and despite the diversity of his purposes, prevented from revealing to us the true pulse of an age.

A Craik and an Aguilar fail to present reality. Their distortions of humanity into the painfully good and the conspicuously bad, and of events into those circumstances best suited to teach a lesson, not only cannot be trusted as guides to their own period, but are offenses against reality in all times and places: didactics are not to be trusted as history. A Collins, a Reade, and even a Dickens, bent on effecting a particular reform, are not only prone to exaggerate the facts they present, but, by their very concentration on a narrow area of human experience, give us a warped conception of the relation of that area to the whole: the reformer is a caricaturist, not a historian. A Mrs. Norton and a Lady Bulwer-Lytton, looking at the world through their own real or imagined sufferings, give us an even more distorted view of reality: a defendent is no impartial witness. Neither is a romancer like Lord Bulwer-Lytton, painting women as he desires them to be rather than as they are. A Black, who wishes to amuse, a Braddon, who prefers to mystify, and an Ouida, who chooses to shock — all are more concerned with literary popularity and the ensuing financial success than with reliably recording their period: a salesman is not a disinterested chronicler.

There are other authors, it is true, whose integrity is too great to allow them to pander to public taste, whose interest in mankind is greater than a single needed change, and

whose personal motives do not enter their work save as that general subjective coloring which makes man's every study of mankind an exercise in lifting oneself by one's own bootstraps. A Meredith is precluded by the very superiority of his insight and discernment from presenting life as it is, indispensable as he may be in suggesting what it may become: a prophet is not a historian. An Eliot and a Thackeray, true to themselves and to human nature, present virtues and vices not in opposing characters, but in inseparable combination in each individual. Such writers we instinctively trust; yet we find on reflection that Maggie Tulliver and Arthur Pendennis are Victorians only by chance. Their authors have given us not a period pattern, but a universal design; and their value, like that of all creations of genius, lies in their timelessness: the philosopher transcends history.

Considering these things, it must be with more regret than criticism that we note the failure of the Victorian novel to keep pace with the changing times. It worked its work, we ours. And wisely, we shall cease to pine for what is not. But as we go our way, we shall be warned agaist depending for a complete picture of Victorian life and manners on a source which was neither able nor willing to supply that need. We shall be safe, we have discovered, in regarding th novel as we would any other collection of museum pieces: as an interesting repository of the details of existence — the clothing, the furniture, the amusements, all the paraphernalia of daily life lived conservatively after the manner of generations gone; but we shall beware of using it as a complete picture of the whole of life, which includes not only permanence, but flux; not only obvious externals but, what is oftener of far greater significance to the understanding of an age, a restless spirit.

VITA

Louise E. Rorabacher, daughter of Edith Turner and Walter Burdick Rorabacher, was born on April 10, 1906, at Worden, Michigan. She attended a rural grade school in Salem Township and was graduated from Central High School, Ypsilanti, Michigan, in 1924. For the following three years she worked on the staff of the Ypsilanti *Daily Press* and with the Camp Publishing Company of that city. In 1927 she entered the University of Michigan, from which she received her A.B. degree, with High Distinction and Special Mention in English, in 1931. For the next five years she taught in the high schools of Oscoda and St. Louis, Michigan. She held a tutorial fellowship at Northwestern University in 1936-37, receiving her M.A. degree in English there in June of the latter year. In 1937 she became an Assistant in English at the University of Illinois. There she continued her graduate study in English for the next five years, save for the summers of 1938 and 1939, which she spent at the universities of Colorado and Michigan respectively. She is a member of Phi Kappa Phi and Phi Beta Kappa.